

SALFORD MENNONITE CHURCH
CHURCH BOARD – Minutes
April 7, 2020

Members Present: Darin Benner, Ron Freed, Chris Miller, Becca Nagy, Randy Nyce, Hannah Richter, Jane Ruth, Dean Wimmer, Margaret Zook

Absent: None

Also Present: Brad Alderfer, Maria Hosler Byler, Jim Rittenhouse, Beth Yoder

1. **Devotions:** Chris Miller led devotions for the board meeting. Chris shared about his families experience with contracting covid-19. Ashley came down with symptom about four weeks ago and Chris took care of Ashley and the kids at the beginning of this experience. Chris then began to experience symptoms as well. To Chris it felt like a cold, but loss of smell and taste was the point where is felt more serious and concerning (these came after 7-8 days). It became stressful when they presumed they were positive and began self-isolating. They made the choice to attempt to have a more positive attitude. They turned off the news. They began to focus on Matthew 6:34, a verse Maria focused on in a recent call to worship. Chris and Ashley also had worries on whether they infected anyone else? But when they started notifying people publicly it was a very humbling experience. They needed to lean on others to do basic tasks and needed to learn to accept others gifts. It was very touching to receive calls from folks at Souderton Mennonite Homes. They had help for everything and were very grateful for all the support of their community. Chris used the cocoon analogy from the Emmaus Road Sunday school class this Sunday as part of his experience. Chris and Ashley and children began to recover about 15-17 days into the experience. Everyone is doing much better now four weeks later.

The board gave time for members to express prayer concerns they are aware of.

2. **Fiduciary:**

March Minutes: The March congregational board minutes were reviewed. One minor correction on a date was noted. The minutes were approved with one minor correction.

Financials:

- A. **Church February 2020 reconciled and March 2020 unreconciled income & expense reports and balance sheets** – The board reviewed the February reconciled and March unreconciled financials. Income and expenses through March 2020 are down from March 2019 (See further conversation below). The board approved the February financials as presented.
- B. **Child Care balance sheet** – The February Child Care balance sheet was not available for review.

3. **Discussion Items.**

- A. **Review of Congregational Profile from Search Committee:** A congregational profile has been created to define who Salford is for the Pastoral search process. This was a joint effort between the search committee, board and staff. When this form is made “live”, it will signify the beginning of the search process. Randy and Margaret are aware from conference that there are already persons who have indicated interest in the Salford Pastor position
- B. **Child Care Operations as a result of COVID-19:** Child Care operations ceased on March 13, 2020, with the governor’s order to close schools. The Child Care ministry team made the decision to not require tuition but asked families to continue contributing as they can. The team also decided to continue to pay teachers 2/3 salary and the majority of health insurance premiums as long as funds are available, with Child Care employees not being eligible for unemployment compensation at this time. The ministry team has asked the church to cover all shared expenses between SMCCC and the church during this time of shutdown to conserve funds for payroll. The board affirmed this request. The ministry team also requested that Salford apply for a Paycheck Protection Program Loan from the Small Business Administration as part of a recent stimulus bill. The board approved the application for the Paycheck Protection Program loan, which was submitted on 4/3/20. The understanding for this loan is that it

will be used for payroll only and will be forgiven by the government as part of the stimulus bill. This loan will be used by church and Child Care to cover payroll during a time of reduced income. If this loan would not be available, Child Care will have enough funds to cover 2/3 employee payroll and health insurance premiums through late April/early May, but not beyond.

- C. **Church Finances and Plans:** Church Finances are holding up reasonably well at this time of unusual life in the church. Income and expenses are both down about 10% compared to previous year prior. Offering was significantly reduced during the first two weeks of no in person worship due to social distancing. But offering was significantly increased over the past two weeks with those mailing in their offering envelopes and utilizing the new online offering options. The board is grateful for everyone's continued stewardship during this unusual time, acknowledging that many are feeling economic concerns in their households. Now is not a time to panic, but it is a time to be aware of members needs and respond to those needs as we are able. Required Minimum Distributions from retirement accounts are not required this year, so some may not submit RMD this year as offering, but many are looking for other ways to give. The church board had conversation on how to use our benevolent funds. This is the rainy day that these funds were being accumulated for. Salford has accumulated approximately \$36,000 in funds from unused Agape Funds in previous years. Beth and Maria are having conversations with Steve Kriss and Franconia Conference on conference needs. FMC has set up a Shalom fund to assist congregations who are struggling financially and who are supporting nonprofit agencies in their communities. They hope to raise \$100,000 for this fund. A recommendation was made to release 1/3 of the benevolent funds to FMC and encourage the congregation to match this giving with some or all the stimulus funds they will receive from the government if financial situations permits. One other thought was to release all the benevolent funds to FMC at this time, with confidence that funds can be generated for other needs. Another thought was to hold some funds to assist Child Care with either payroll or re-start needs and to hold some funds for members needs in the upcoming months. **After much conversation, the board affirmed releasing \$12,500 for the Franconia Conference Shalom Fund with a recommendation to encourage the congregation to match these contributions with some or all their stimulus check, and to encourage/challenge other FMC congregations to assist with donations to the shalom fund.**
- D. **Congregational Survey:** A draft survey on gauging personal convictions on fully defined welcoming of LGBTQ persons at Salford has been developed and is undergoing final review by a staff and board subcommittee. The goal is to have this draft survey available for review at the May board meeting.

4. **Reports/Updates:**

- A. **Pastor's Report:** Beth reported on the brain swirl of the new normal feeling of being overwhelmed with what is needed in this time, but also buoyed up by the work and this meaningful time of ministry. But it is also daunting with the challenges we face. Comments were given in appreciation for the live streaming work that is being done for our Sunday worship; for the person participating in worship and for Darwin Zehr, Steve Schwendy and Dave Peters who produce the stream for each Sunday. Maria expressed appreciation for teamwork and how each contributes to guiding the congregation during time. She is also thankful for the cards and words of encouragement from the congregation for the work that is being done. Beth will be taking a day of spiritual retreat during the week after Easter and is encouraging Maria to consider a time of retreat.
- B. **SMCCC Minutes:** No minutes to review this evening.

5. **Other Business:** None.

6. **Closing Prayer:** Chris Miller closed in prayer.

Respectfully recorded by Brad Alderfer
Next Meeting: May 5, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.